

House Bill 163

March 7, 2013

Presented by George Pauley  
Senate Fish and Game Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am George Pauley, Wildlife Management Bureau Chief of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). I am here today on behalf of the Director to provide information regarding House Bill 163.

HB 163 would eliminate the trophy fee for mountain lions. Trophy fees were first issued for grizzly bears in 1967. They were first required of mountain lion licenses in 1984. The concept behind issuance of trophy fees was rather than sell an expensive trophy license to hunt mountain lions, a cheaper license to hunt was sold so as not to discourage hunting, and then additional cost would be charged to those that harvest a lion. Additional justification was to direct the harvest towards the larger or "trophy" animals. It is apparent that early on, there was interest in having the fee go toward lion monitoring, although it was not earmarked as such.

In terms of fiscal impact, last year there were 470 lions harvested by hunters, so at \$50 each, the revenue was \$23,500. It may be slightly more into the future as harvest is expected to go up.

For comparison purposes, a resident lion license in surrounding states varies from \$24 to \$84 vs. \$19 in MT; and nonresident licenses range in cost from \$323 to \$376 vs. \$350 in MT.

I will be available to answer any questions.

Thank you.